

## 2024 Rhode Island Legislative Priorities

Victory in the fight against cancer requires bold new public policies that promote cancer prevention, early detection of cancer, and expand access to quality, affordable health care. Lawmakers make many decisions that impact the lives of Rhode Islanders impacted by cancer and their leadership is vital to defeating this disease. In 2024 the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) will work with the Rhode Island General Assembly on legislative and regulatory efforts that provide affordable, adequate access to health insurance including Medicaid, ensure adequate funding for lifesaving cancer screening and prevention programs, and enact prevention policies to protect kids from tobacco products and help support those who are trying to quit. We will be making the following fact-based policies a priority and ask for your support:

### Ensuring Access to Quality Care

- **Prescription Drug Affordability:** ACS CAN supports legislation that restricts the use of so-called copay accumulator adjustments in health insurance plans. We will advocate for policies that ensure third party prescription drug copay assistance is counted toward patients' out-of-pocket cost obligations.
- **Prescription Drug Access:** ACS CAN will advocate for legislation that ensures prior authorization and step therapy requirements for prescription drugs are clear, efficient and patient-friendly while also allowing for exceptions when appropriate.
- **Paid Family and Medical Leave:** ACS CAN will advocate for legislation that ensures all working cancer patients, survivors, and caregivers have access to paid family and medical leave that allows them to take time off work to attend to their own or a loved one's care without losing their job or income.

### Cancer Prevention and Early Detection

- **Breast and Cervical Cancer:** ACS CAN will advocate to increase funding for the Center for Chronic Care & Disease Management and the Women's Cancer Screening program, our state's breast and cervical cancer screening and treatment program for low-income uninsured and underinsured women administered by the Rhode Island Department of Health. Increased funding could allow for mass media campaigns to increase awareness of the program. The funding could also allow for enhanced mammography infrastructure at public institutions to increase access and eliminate a major barrier to screening.

### Reducing the Toll of Tobacco

- **Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Funding:** ACS CAN will work to increase funding for evidence-based, statewide tobacco use prevention and cessation programs to \$3.2 million, with future regular increases until we reach the CDC recommended level of \$12.8 million for evidence-based tobacco control, prevention, and cessation programs that help people who use tobacco products quit and prevent children from ever starting.

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- **Tobacco Taxes:** As the State of Rhode Island works to identify funding strategies to fund critical programs, ACS CAN will advocate to increase the price of all tobacco products by increasing the excise tax on cigarettes by at least \$1.00 per pack and equalizing the tax on all other tobacco products, including e-cigarettes. Currently, excise taxes on tobacco products are applied unevenly, which makes some other tobacco products like cigars and e-cigarettes relatively cheaper and more attractive to youth, young adults, and individuals with limited incomes. Regular and significant increases in tobacco taxes can save lives, reduce health care costs, and reduce the tax burden from smoking-caused government expenditures. At least \$3.2 million of the total revenue from tobacco taxes should be used to fund and sustain evidence-based, statewide tobacco prevention and cessation programs.
- **Menthol Cigarettes and All Other Flavored Tobacco Products:** ACS CAN supports legislation to end the sale of menthol cigarettes and all other flavored tobacco products. Comprehensive policies to end the sale of flavored tobacco products must include all tobacco products, all flavors, and all tobacco retailers.
- **Smoke-free Air** ACS CAN will work to strengthen the Rhode Island Public Health and Workplace Safety Act, our statewide smoke-free law that covers all workplaces, except for casinos and pari-mutuel facilities. We will work to expand the statewide smoke-free law to eliminate this exemption.

## Local Control

- ACS CAN supports the authority of local governments to pass local policies that go beyond state laws to help families be healthy, safe and secure. Policymaking at the local level allows innovation and creative problem solving that builds on local strengths and addresses local needs. ACS CAN works at the local, state and federal levels to ensure everyone has a fair and just opportunity to prevent, fight and survive cancer. ACS CAN will oppose legislation that restricts the freedom of local leaders to best serve your shared constituents.

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ACS CAN is making cancer a top priority for public officials and candidates at the federal, state, and local levels. ACS CAN empowers advocates across the country to make their voices heard and influence evidence-based public policy change as well as legislative and regulatory solutions that will reduce the cancer burden. As the American Cancer Society's nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy affiliate, ACS CAN is critical to the fight for a world without cancer. For more information, please visit [www.fightcancer.org](http://www.fightcancer.org).

**The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network | [www.fightcancer.org/RhodeIsland](http://www.fightcancer.org/RhodeIsland)**

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